

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE

JINHUI ZHONG,

Plaintiff,

v.

MICHAEL MUKASEY, *et al.*,

Defendants.

No. C07-1468RSL

ORDER TO SEAL DOCUMENTS
AND FILE REDACTED COPIES
OF SEALED DOCUMENTS

This matter comes before the Court *sua sponte*. The Court was shocked and alarmed that with plaintiff's motion for summary judgment, her counsel filed copies of *highly* personal documents, including plaintiff's social security card, driver's license, marriage certificate, passport, and the birth certificates of her children without redacting any of the personal information therein. The documents contain plaintiff's most sensitive personal identifying information; filing them was totally inappropriate in this era when identity theft is a major problem. The filings also violate the General Order of the Court regarding Public Access to Electronic Case Files (filed 5/29/03), which requires parties to redact the following information from documents and exhibits before they are filed with the court:

* Dates of Birth - redact to the year of birth

* Names of Minor Children - redact to the initials

1 * Social Security Numbers - redact to the last four digits

2 * Financial Accounting Information - redact to the last four digits

3 The General Order was issued by the court pursuant to the official policy on privacy
4 adopted by the Judicial Conference of the United States and can be found on the court's website
5 at <http://www.wawd.uscourts.gov/docs>. All documents filed in the above-captioned matter must
6 comply with the Privacy Policy and the General Order.
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8 The filing of the documents is even more egregious because there was no need to do so.
9 The information in the documents, including the fact that plaintiff is married to a U.S. citizen
10 and their children are U.S. citizens, is not contested. The same information could have been
11 offered via declaration without including the other highly personal information that appears in
12 records like birth certificates. Alternatively, counsel could have moved to file the documents
13 under seal to protect his client. In addition, counsel understood his obligation to redact as
14 reflected by the fact that he attempted to do so with the documents submitted with plaintiff's
15 reply.¹ Given the public nature of the filings and the high degree of risk to plaintiff's and her
16 family's personal information, counsel is admonished for the improper filings. He and his law
17 firm Gibbs Houston Pauw, who frequently represent immigration clients in this district, are
18 warned that if they file documents with such personal information again, sanctions may be
19 imposed.
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22 In order to restrict access to the private and confidential information that has already
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24 _____
25 ¹ Nevertheless, the exhibits filed with plaintiff's reply still contain some birth dates and the name
26 of a minor child.

1 made its way into the record in an expeditious manner, the Clerk of Court is hereby directed to
2 seal the exhibits to plaintiff's motion (Dkt. #5-3) and the exhibits to plaintiff's reply (Dkt. #8-3,
3 #8-4 and #8-5) in the above-captioned matter.

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5 As a result of the improper filings, a substantial portion of the record is now sealed,
6 which is inconsistent with the public's right of access. Plaintiff is therefore ORDERED to file,
7 within ten days of the date of this order, copies of Exhibits C, H, I, J, K, M, N, O, P, and Q, and
8 redacted copies of Exhibits L and T. Plaintiff need not refile copies of Exhibits A, B, D, E, F,
9 and G, as those documents are unnecessary and should not have been filed in the first place. If
10 the parties have any questions about the Privacy Policy and the General Order or need assistance
11 in filing and properly labeling the redacted copies, they should contact the CM/ECF Helpdesk at
12 1-866-ECF-WAWD (1-866-323-9293).
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15 DATED this 10th day of January, 2008.

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18 Robert S. Lasnik
19 United States District Judge
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